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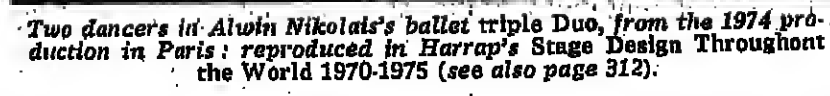
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By Felix Gilbert

Misunderstanding of the book's

Professor Pocock gave a theoretical essay some years ago in his apposite "Language and The Implications; The Transformation of the Study of 'Political Thought'" in which he explained that the proper way to do the historian of political thought is to look at the language of politics and that the language of politics is not the language of "politics" and that the particular methodology needed for such an investigation gave the study of political thought the status of "discontinuity and autonomy. This is very different from the traditional procedures in this field. Neither is the study of political thought treated as a history of individual thinkers whose life events can explain their contribution to this field.

This connection can be shown only by careful reading of a text, from sentence to sentence, almost from word to word, and it can become evident to the reader only by making him a participant in such a detailed textual study. This is a book on which the reader must devote uninterrupted, close attention. It is not simplified by the style of the book; it is terse and complex. The consensus was probably necessary in order to keep the book within a manageable size. I feel sure about the need for complexity of style.

When Professor Pocock turns from textual interpretation to summarizing statements he writes sentences of impressive and brilliant simplicity. There are few scholars, I suspect, who would not like to have written what Professor Pocock said about Greek history.

This view, which dates from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, is a classic humanism, an important factor in political thought, and a common road-journey of views commonly held. With the exception of the brilliant but unique figure of Rousseau, who wanted to separate political behaviour from Christian morality, this view was thought of as the Italian Renaissance but was considered as closely tied to its own time, as an integral element in the intellectual climate of the time, and its importance and influence were less than when history moved away from Europe to other regions of Europe.


book presents a much more positive evaluation of the political thought of the Italian Renaissance. The political writers of this period are presented as the creators of the political language of civic humanism, and it is argued that this political rhetoric remained in force until the eighteenth century, shaping even the beginnings of American political thought. Professor Pocock's book, though

However, such a view of the past is not yet adequate, requires that the concept of a world he regarded as a sealed individualism, that the things were connected in the meanings, or in the Actions and events to be must be viewed as being the cause of preceding historical developments in order to be connected with the history. The simple fact created a difficult problem in evolution of a historical process although the presence of an Apocalyptic and might be attempted with Christianity, attempt to give a meaning to the sequence of human events was unthinkable because it was in limitation of God's absolute dominion. The genesis of a history, therefore, was connected with the process of evolution.

Professor Pocock's discussion of the development involved in the origin of a historical outlook is one of the greatest interest to historians of historiography. It says that most of those who are working in this field find the treatment of this subject jumping from one historical period to the next—unsatisfactorily, clearly, such studies ought to be organized around the function of the historian.

Professor Pocock considers to have been the greatest achievement of the political thought of the Italian Renaissance, and he justly takes Machiavelli with his deistic turn of mind as the greatest exponent of the genesis of a new political philosophy. He is a master of political rhetoric in the political sense of that word, and he has no doubt that these writers will find this part of the book of "the greatest possible use". Numerous Florentine or Venetian political treatises and memoranda—those printed only in rare editions—are now more widely known, at least their main features and aims. One might wonder whether any of them might not have been deservedly forgotten, and whether any of them were a political writer in the modern sense of the word, on his own right and not simply as a recipient of Machiavelli's fame. The letter, and whether Giovanni de' Medici's Florentine secretary—a man of letters, wit, and venom and a man of letters—was the author of a remarkable chiefly because it was written by Machiavelli for his Florentine History—deserved eight pages.

But Professor Pocock does intend to give us a balanced account of the political ideas of the humanism but to establish a complex of concepts and ideas which was linked to what he considers the central problem of Renaissance political thought is concerned with the question "whether the civic virtues and values could indeed be held fast in time." This question makes sense only in the framework of a determinist society, i.e. it presupposes "a republican vision of history."



Niccolò Machiavelli.

The more politically minded found in Machievelli's writings with their emphasis on utility and on an aggressive power politics, a more fertile source of the international doctrine of the interdependence of states, the germs of a realistic political science. Quite consciously this part of Machievelli's legacy is disregarded by Pocock. Not only does he proceed in the first section of his book in which he develops the ideas of history only to the point where they implied the creation of a new political language, he neglects to connect Machievelli's intellectual legacy with only one strand—the intermingling of his ideas with those of classical humanism. The pursuit of this strand leads him to the English and the British colonies in North America.

It seems astounding to many that doctrines developed in and by the urban society of the Italian republics should have any value for a country whose powerful elements of a few years past that "republican and Medicean" ideas "should be abandoned in an ever increasing measure by 'marcharchical, hierarchical and theological concepts'". According to Professor Pocock, however, there were links which made the transplantation of the Medicean civic humanism into this very urban social milieu possible. In addition to the existence of a strong Aristotelian tradition which created a common language, there was impulse to a vita activa, a drive to English society to create its own morality.

It was crucial, however, that the seventeenth-century Englishmen also flood the apocalyptic literature with what demanded to be complete in value, variety, and richness. In the voracious times had given place to the political thought a new form of life in England. "Apparently, the greater degree than in the Protestantism of the sixteenth century, a national, a mode of envisioning the nation as existing and acting in a secret time". This mood proved an opening for the influence of political thought on the innovative restricted to certain periods of inner upheaval and to particular individuals or groups, and they form the subject of Professor Pocock's presentation.

Professor Pocock interprets the thought of the radicals of the seventeenth century and of the English revolutionaries in the eighteenth century in terms of the complex character of their political thinking. In an interesting discussion of Michael Walzer's *The Revolution of the Shirts*, he shows the importance of the civil war revolution, only alienated states but also meant by traditional notions of English history. As can be expected, Harrington's influence on Italian political thought is evident, receiving lengthy treatment. His "marks a moment of profound breakthrough, a major step in English history, a step which has the right of concepts — from civic humanism and Machiavellian republicanism." Harrington's case also "supplies a stimulus and fascinating commentary on the



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